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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: SOUTH-EAST STATES TARGET CLINICS INVOLVED  
IN TRAFFICKING

11. (SBU) Summary. In response to information passed by Post's fraud prevention unit (FPU), police authorities in four of the five South-East zone states have raided clinics involved in trafficking infants. Clinic staff were paying less than 200 dollars to young, indigent pregnant women in exchange for their babies. The clinics would give the babies to bogus adoption agencies that would charge adoptive parents a hefty fee. The director of one of the more active facilitating agencies in Abia State is under indictment as is a state judge. Abia State is having problems rehabilitating the many women and infants found at these clinics. The state's First Lady has taken up the cause and has made statements on the issue to local media. End Summary.

12. (SBU) At an August 25 meeting in Enugu State, Police Commissioners from Enugu, Abia, Anambra, and Imo States told Post Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM) that, in response to information supplied by Post, they had begun cracking down on adoption fraud outlets in their jurisdictions. They all claimed to have discovered clinics where pregnant women, usually young and poor, were admitted and given a per diem of several hundred Naira (equivalent of between \$4 and \$6) until the baby's birth. Once the babies were born, the clinic would give the mothers between N10,000 to N15,000 (\$75 to \$110) for the child. The babies were then sent to a complicit adoption agency that portrayed the infants as foundlings to potential adoptive parents. Fees for the adoption of these children ranged from N200,000 to N500,000, or between \$1,500 and \$3,600. Boys fetch higher prices than girls.

13. (SBU) In Abia State, the situation is particularly acute. An adoption agency there, the Suzzy Foundation, had long been under suspicion by Post's immigration visa unit. Abia State police raided the agency and arrested its director. Police also confirmed they had arrested a state judge and were investigating a social welfare officer and a local magistrate. As a result of the raids in Abia, police have taken many pregnant women and newborns into custody, but lack the resources to shelter them. The police have appealed to the state's First Lady. She has addressed the media on the issue, and promised to make the apprehension of perpetrators and care for victims top priorities. She is pushing for continued investigation of doctors and lawyers involved in the adoption business.

14. (SBU) The police cited imposter adoptive parents as a problem. By Nigerian law, adoptive parents visit a child and take the child into custody personally for an extended, trial home stay. In the case of adoptions by American citizens, adoption agencies and state authorities often are not sure whether the parents who come to pick up a child are the American citizens requesting the adoption. They have recorded many cases where it turns out that friends or relatives of the American citizens were actually the ones who took the child into custody. While such imposter schemes may simply be designed to save Nigerian American adoptive parents plane fare, police see them as exploitable by traffickers as well and are therefore interested in stopping them. Post FPM asked that authorities fax any identification supplied by potential adoptive parents so that Post could confirm their American citizenship and confirm that photographs from our passport records match the individuals present.

15. (SBU) Comment. Investigations by local police often lead to the discovering of large numbers of trafficking victims. This meeting with police authorities from the South-East States was important on two counts. One, it demonstrated the police chiefs were enthused to tackle illegal trafficking in their backyards and to make their states a less attractive transport depot. Second, their action could spur those nearby states with greater trafficking problems to better action. In June, Cross River state police picked up a bus carrying 40 children to Cameroon for forced labor. Press coverage and heightened awareness in

the South East can therefore help reduce trafficking by shutting down a major transit area. Post FPM and TIP officer will travel to the South East for meetings with police officials in November to determine ways to help Abia State and its First Lady with their outreach campaign and expand it to other states. Police in Abia State, along with a journalist from the Nigerian Television Network (NTN), compiled a very graphic video that recently aired and may turn even more attention to this problem. End Comment.  
BROWNE